

**HIGHLAND MAIN STREET MEETING**  
**Highland, Indiana 46322**  
**August 6, 2020 MINUTES**

The Highland Main Street Bureau met in an electronically conducted Public Meeting on August 6, 2020.

This meeting will be convened as an electronic meeting, pursuant to Governor Holcomb's Executive Orders 20-04, 20-09 and 20-25 and now extended by Executive Order 20-38 through 2 September 2020 allowing such meetings, pursuant to IC 5-14-1.5-3.6 for the duration of the emergency. All persons were meeting remotely using the Zoom platform that allowed for real time interaction, and supported the public's ability to observe and record the proceedings.

**Call to Order**

At 6:32 PM, the Highland Main Street (HMS) meeting was called to order by President Dawn Diamantopoulos.

**Roll Call:**

The following were present electronically, via the Zoom platform: Board Members Dawn Diamantopoulos, Lola McKay, Teri Yovkovich, Kali Rasala, Marie Russo, Mary Wells, Redevelopment Director Kathy DeGuilio-Fox, and Redevelopment Assistant Lance Ryskamp. Board Member Julie Larson and Town Council liaison Roger Sheeman joined the meeting after the call to order. Board members Emily Foreit and Mary Ellis were absent. Also, present electronically was Jacqui Herrera of the Council of Community Events and Ed Dabrowski, Highland's IT Director. NOTE: Board member Aubrey Velasquez submitted her resignation, via email, from the Board on August 6, 2020.

**Minutes:**

Teri Yovkovich made a motion, seconded by Lola McKay, to approve minutes from the July 2, 2020 meeting. The motion passed on a voice vote 6-0.

**Community Garden Committee**

President Diamantopoulos reported that contact has been made with the coordinator of the St. James Food Pantry, and they are willing to take and distribute all of the produce we can give to them. St. James distributes food to Highland families in need weekly. She said Julie Larson has agreed to coordinate with St. James as produce is harvested, with produce to be picked on Thursday and delivered to St. James on Thursday night each week. President Diamantopoulos said further discussion on this would take place later in the meeting when Julie Larson joined the call.

There was a discussion about the need for weeding to be done and President Diamantopoulos and Mary Wells said they would coordinate when they could both work in the garden over the weekend.

**Events Committee:**

**Makers' Market**

President Diamantopoulos reported that due to growing concerns of increased cases of COVID-19, as well as the decision by the School Town of Highland to begin the school year with eLearning rather than in-person classes, the Board should consider whether or not to cancel the event.

Teri Yovkovich said that she thought the event could be held safely with precautions taken for social distancing. She said that at some point there needs to be an opportunity for people to do something normal, with precautions taken.

President Diamantopoulos said that she had reached out to numerous potential vendors and she was told by many that they are not interested in events during this period of COVID-19 uncertainty. She said they either did not want to take the risk themselves or face the possible backlash of participating. She said she believed that if the Board went forward with the event that it would be smaller than the 2019 event.

When asked how many vendors were interested, the Redevelopment Assistant said that there were only three vendors committed to date. He then gave a brief overview of the status of planning and advised that there have been no contracts signed or commitments made that would be impacted by a decision to cancel. He said that he heard from a couple of possible vendors that events scheduled for October and beyond were already being cancelled.

Mary Wells said that she did not believe that sufficient vendors could be found. She said that shows she has participated in have cancelled events into December. Redevelopment Director DeGuilio-Fox said it would not be fair to the vendors to drag out a decision whether to cancel or not, as they would have to invest money in making product to sell at the event. Mary Wells said that it would a financial burden on vendors in terms of costs for the booth space and materials.

Marie Russo and Kali Rasala both expressed the opinion that the event should be cancelled. Lola Mckay said that there would be health risks to the Board members and volunteers for them to work the event. Teri Yovkovich said that based on the information and feedback from vendors discussed that the Board would need to be practical and she supported cancellation.

During this report, Board member Julie Larson joined the call. President Diamantopoulos recapped the discussion held before she joined the call and Julie Larson said it would make sense to cancel the event.

Julie Larson then revisited the discussion on the community garden. She said that she had been approached to do composting at the garden, but the consensus was that it was too late in the season to look to that. She said she will personally deliver the first produce presented to St. James. She also said an ID and proof of residency (ex; utility bill) will be needed for residents to pick up food at St. James' Friday food distribution.

Returning to the issue of Makers' Market, at the end of discussion, Lola McKay made a motion to cancel the 2020 Makers' Market The motion was seconded by Mary Wells, and the motion passed unanimously on a voice vote 7-0.

**Art:**

The Redevelopment Assistant reported that he had been in contact, via email, with Jessica Haug concerning repair of her mural in the Jewett Street Mural Alcove. He said that he had received no response and to date, the repairs had not been completed. He said he would continue to follow-up.

**Downtown Promotions:**

Teri Yovkovich reported that she did not receive any additional feedback from downtown businesses about possible promotional ideas. She said she would compile the input from the five businesses on Jewett Street who had responded previously.

The Redevelopment Assistant reported to the Board that a revised draft of the letter to downtown restaurants proposing a restaurant crawl was part of the meeting packets. He said that the draft should include an email address for feedback to be sent to. President Diamantopoulos said that her email address could be added. A discussion ensued about also adding that

businesses could change their featured menu item from month to month for the sake of variety. At the end of the discussion, the Redevelopment Assistant said he would make the necessary changes and send the letter out to the restaurants.

**Other Business:**

Redevelopment Director DeGuilio-Fox reviewed the proposed Redevelopment Department 2021 Budget. She reported that departments were required to make a 10% reduction from their 2020 budget, due to tax caps, an increase in insurance and the impact of COVID-19 on tax collections. She reported that through larger cuts in other line items that only 1% was cut from both the Main Street supplies and professional services line items, which resulted in an approximate reduction of \$120 total. President Diamantopoulos thanked Director DeGuilio-Fox for her hard work to preserve as much Main Street funding as possible.

President Diamantopoulos raised the topic of the future status of the Poet Laureate program, noting that no successor to former Poet Laureate Alaina Polen had been made. The Redevelopment Assistant reported that he had been contacted by Ms. Polen several weeks before and said this was a topic which could be discussed by the Board now, or could wait until 2021 planning at the end of the year. President Dawn Diamantopoulos said that it could wait, but indicated that a new chairman to oversee that committee would need to be identified if the project was to go forward in 2021. Lola McKay said that it would be better to wait, so the Board could assess conditions heading into the new year.

**Discussion**

President Diamantopoulos asked Director DeGuilio-Fox for an update on the Redevelopment Commission's Depot project at the southwest corner of Highway and Kennedy. Director DeGuilio-Fox reported that the project was underway, beginning with tree removal from the site. She said that a ground breaking had taken place onsite that week. She further reported that the planned retaining wall for the project no longer needs to be constructed, owing to the surface being more level than expected after trees were removed. She said that she had hand-delivered letters to the surrounding businesses to advise them of the project and the temporary restriction on parking at the site and there was a lot of enthusiasm for the project by business owners downtown.

President Diamantopoulos asked about a completion date. Director DeGuilio-Fox indicated that the plan called for completion to be in late October or early November, at which time there will be a ribbon-cutting ceremony at the site. She further reported that the project would involve repaving the site, new lighting, two rain gardens, a realignment of the bike path to be marked by stamped asphalt, benches, infrastructure for electric vehicle charging stations and the Depot facility. Kali Rasala asked about the type of drinking fountains to be installed and Director DeGuilio-Fox said she would need to find out. She also advised the Board that the Redevelopment Commission would be discussing possible options for the gas station located directly on the southwest corner of Kennedy and Highway at their next study session

**Adjournment**

With no further business, Lola McKay made a motion, seconded by Marie Russo, to adjourn. The motion passed on a voice vote 7-0. The meeting was adjourned at 7:14 PM.